

OCTOBER 2018

PDGR grant recipients to share highlights of their diverse research projects

The Professional Development Grants for Retirees (PDGR) program was launched by UMRA in 2008 to encourage retirees' continuing productivity. The program is administered by UMRA and the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) and is unique among American research universities. Currently, it provides grants of up to \$5,000 for research, teaching, and artistic endeavor. All faculty, professional and administrative, and civil service retirees from the Twin Cities and coordinate campuses of the University are eligible for the grants (if fully retired by July 1 in the year of grant application).

Our October luncheon program will feature two recipients of recent PDGR grants, **Jonathan Ravdin, M.D.**, from the Department of Medicine and **Joanne Eicher, Ph.D.**, from the Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel. They will describe the results of their research projects, which are vastly different in nature and nicely illustrate the great range of possibilities supported by this competitive grant program.



Jonathan Ravdin was Nesbitt professor and chair of the Department of Medicine when he retired from the University. "Utilizing Biostatistical Analysis of Case Management Data to Enhance Future Outcomes of the Youth and AIDS Projects" is the title of his research project, for which he was awarded PDGR grants in 2017 and 2018.

An internationally respected medical researcher, Ravdin will discuss the value of undergraduate students as assistants in his research on AIDS involving clients between ages 13 and 24. The research is focused on the management of AIDS cases and their

effective treatment in this youthful population.

Joanne Eicher retired from the College of Design as a Regents professor. "Analysis of Traditions of Kalabari Living Abroad" is the title of her project, for which she, too, won consecutive grants, in 2015 and 2016.

As editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion*, Eicher has written extensively about the cultural significance of dress. One of her books, *Mother, Daughter, Sister, Bride: Rituals of Womanhood*, was published by *National Geographic*.

She will present and illustrate her project about the Kalabari, whose homeland is the Niger Delta in Nigeria, though many have emigrated to the U.S. The grant funding aided Eicher in the completion of her book on the Kalabari people.



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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday, October 23, 2018
11:30–1 p.m.
Workshop
1:30–2:30 p.m.

Featured speakers
PDGR grant recipients
Jonathan Ravdin and
Joanne Eicher

Location
Conference Room, ABC
Campus Club, Fourth Floor
Coffman Memorial Union

Menu
Gerhard bratwurst, sauerkraut,
and German potato salad with
local potatoes, onions, and Iowa
Berkshire bacon.

*For GF, DF, or vegan alternative,
please request when making your
reservation.*

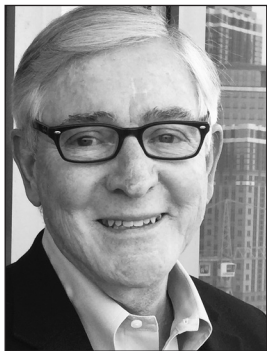
RSVP by Tuesday, October 16
Prepayment of \$20 per person;
annual prepayors, please make
reservations for this event.

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Or, contact Judy before the dead-
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jleahy4654@aol.com.

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In September the UMRA Board reviewed the wide-ranging list of new initiatives generated at the August leadership retreat (see last month's column). The discussion of prioritizing the proposals raised interesting questions about UMRA's mission and surfaced inherent tensions between the desire to serve

and influence the University with the need to care for the welfare of our retirees.

UMRA's mission and purpose have been articulated in various ways over the years; while in most statements it is clear that "service to retirees" and "service to the University" are simply two sides of UMRA's currency, it is a little more complicated than that.

Conversations with UMRA leaders with more experience than I, and a review of minutes of Board meetings over the years, reveal that "service to the University" means different things to different people. For some it is serving on committees, volunteering to assist in University projects and activities; for others, it is having a seat at the table and a voice in University planning and decision-making.

At this time in our history, however, I think it is fair to say that we have more control over the services we provide members and more opportunity to volunteer to help, than we have ability to participate in and/or influence University governance or endeavors. The latter can only occur if UMRA's contributions and impact are recognized by University leadership.

We need to think strategically

To be on the list of community partners the University turns to when it undertakes major search processes or seeks input on strategic directions or assistance at the legislature, we need to think strategically about our activities and initiatives. Certainly, we can build upon the recent report from the University of Minnesota Foundation, which shows UMRA members have contributed or pledged more than \$23 million dollars to the U since 2012. We can also make sure that our representatives to and liaisons with University units are well prepared to present UMRA's interests.

Three proposals included in our discussion of priorities could also clearly help raise our visibility: 1) writing opinion pieces for local media addressing our perspectives on

issues impacting retirees and the University; 2) inviting leaders of various search processes to special information sessions for UMRA members; and 3) encouraging and recognizing collegiate and departmental efforts to engage their retirees.

I believe that thinking and communicating strategically about these proposals, and others currently under consideration, can have positive impacts on our retirees' experience and deepen the perception of UMRA in the broader community. Continuing our strong tradition of working together, we can make this happen.

—Jerry Rinehart, UMRA president, 2018–19

Annual PDGR grant competition opens mid-October

What about that book you've wanted to finish or that project you've been meaning to get to but just lacked the wherewithall to get going? Well, applications for the 2019 Professional Development Grant for Retirees (PDGR) program open October 15, and you could be awarded up to \$5,000 to advance your project.

All University retirees from all campuses who will be fully retired by July 1, 2019, are eligible for the program. Projects may range from scholarly research to artistic works, and expenses may include travel and per diem costs related to research trips and conference attendance, stipends for undergraduate and/or graduate research assistants, photocopying, the purchase of books, computer hardware, software, and other relevant expenses related to scholarship.

Visit the UMRA website for application instructions and a listing of previously funded projects: umra.umn.edu > *Activities* > *Grants for Retirees* > *Grant Application Instructions*

Applications are to be submitted online by December 14. Approved proposals will be announced in March; the new grants will start on April 1, 2019, and extend to June 30, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact me at dick@umn.edu.

—Dick Poppele, chair, PDGR Committee

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You can make a difference


The future of the PDGR program depends on continuing support to provide the necessary funding. The program has been funded by the offices of the University president, vice presidents, and deans through 2018. Beginning in 2019, we have an agreement with the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost for stable funding of \$40,000 per year for the foreseeable future. The goal for the program is to maintain a long-term average of 10-12 grants per year, which will require total funding of about \$50,000 per year.

There is a demand fund held at the University of Minnesota Foundation that provides support for the PDGR program to help fill the funding gap. If you have questions or would like information about how to make a gift in support of this program, please contact Lynn Praska at lpraska@umn.edu or 612-624-4158 at the Foundation.

—Bill Donohue, chair, Program Committee, and Dick Poppele, chair, PDGR Committee

To read the speakers' grant abstracts and learn about other awards, visit umra.umn.edu/grants-retirees/pgd-awards

Thank you to the University of Minnesota Bookstores for helping to sponsor our October newsletter.



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October workshop: 2019 health plans for University retirees

If you are an UMRA member who has one of the University post-65 retiree health plans or if you are a new retiree contemplating your health plan options, then you will want to attend the 2019 health plans for retirees workshop following UMRA's October luncheon. There will be more changes in the coming year than usual because Medicare Cost plans will no longer be available in certain areas of Minnesota due to the implementation of a federal law. A representative from the U's Office of Human Resources (OHR) will provide an overview and comparison of the new benefit plans, including rates for 2019. The workshop is Tuesday, October 23, 1:30–2:30 p.m.

There are additional opportunities to get information on the retiree health plans, too. If you are currently enrolled in one of the University's plans you should have received a letter from OHR about presentations on September 26 and October 4, which can be accessed online: humanresources.umn.edu/benefits/benefits-retirees.

Also, OHR will host benefit fairs with plan representatives on the Minneapolis campus on November 6 and the St. Paul campus on November 7. You should receive information via the U.S. mail about these fairs.

—Dale Swanson, UMRA representative to the Health Care Benefits Advisory Committee

Living well workshops

Additional workshops currently scheduled for the coming program year include:

November 27, “Disruptive changes, losses, and resiliency,” a presentation by Ted Bowman, a St. Paul-based educator, author, and consultant who specializes in change and transition.

January 22, “How to start practicing mindfulness and meditation,” a panel discussion led by UMRA member Ron Matross.

February 26, “Finding the best long-term care facility,” a panel discussion led by UMRA member Ron Anderson.

Parking reservations available

When making your reservation for the October luncheon and program, add a reservation for parking to ensure your parking space in the East River Road Ramp. Inform the attendant (on duty between 10 a.m. and noon) when you arrive that you have a reservation. Pay as usual when exiting, using your UMRA discount parking coupon.

HELLO, my name is Cherie Hamilton

Hometown: I was born in Manhattan, lived in Brooklyn until age 6, and then moved to New Haven, Connecticut, where I grew up, went to school, college, and married. My husband, Russell, and I moved to Brazil for two-plus years when he was doing research for his doctoral thesis while a graduate student at Yale.

When did you become a member of UMRA? In 2009.

What was your occupation when you retired from FT work? Director of recruitment and staffing services at Vanderbilt University. Earlier in my career, I was EEO representative and manager of recruitment for General Mills, where I directed college recruiting of MBAs and electrical and mechanical engineers.

Do you have a favorite place on the U of M campus? The McNamara Alumni Center, home of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), where for the past 13 years I have been an active member, including two years as president. I have enjoyed working with fellow OLLI members, both on campus and off, including five OLLI trips I arranged and led to Portugal and Brazil.



Cherie Hamilton, at home in Minneapolis

What is a fun fact about you we might not know?

I am fluent in Portuguese and taught in Brazil (high school math and English) and later served as an interpreter in Angola and Belgium. I also spent four summers as a guest lecturer at Middlebury Language School in Vermont. Something else little known about me is that I was first violinist and concert mistress (first female and first minority) for the Johnson Junior Symphony in New Haven.

What is something you currently enjoy doing?

Reading mysteries, watching old movies, cooking international cuisines, traveling, and learning about new cultures. I also knit blankets for preemies and newborns at the U of M Masonic Children's Hospital.

Welcome new members to UMRA

Please give a hearty welcome to 20 new members who have joined UMRA since mid-August. Encourage anyone you know to attend our monthly meetings, greet all newcomers, and help introduce them to other members.

- Lisa Brienzo, Academic Health Center (AHC), Food Protection and Defense Institute, P&A
- Elaine (and Tom) Collison, AHC, Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, P&A
- William C. Engeland, Medical School, Neuroscience, faculty
- Susan Fautsch, AHC, Masonic Cancer Center, P&A
- David F. Fisher, Law School, Corporate Institute, P&A
- William Gardner (and Crystal Meriwether), College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), Dean's Office, faculty
- Diane Gihl, Central Administration, Office of the Provost, civil service
- Char Greenwald, CEHD, Systems Academic Administration, AFSCME
- David Hansen, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, U of M Extension, P&A
- Glenn Hirsch, Office for Student Affairs and Student Counseling Services, P&A
- Yin Jiang, College of Veterinary Medicine, Diagnostic Laboratory, P&A
- Dharma Kodali, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, Bioproducts and Biosystems Engineering, faculty
- Sally Kohlstedt, College of Science and Engineering, History of Science, Technology and Medicine, faculty
- Kenneth Larson, Office of the General Counsel, P&A
- Jeff Mandel, School of Public Health, Environmental Health Sciences, faculty
- Katherine L. McGill, Libraries, P&A
- Hilda Viktoria Mork, College of Liberal Arts, Sociology, civil service
- Jann Owen, Office of Information Technology, civil service
- Sue Pummill, Department of Psychoeducational Studies, civil service
- Allison Skoberg, Graduate School, Fellowship Office, P&A

For contact information, please visit umra.umn.edu > Contact Us > Member Search (login required)

Welcome reception and orientation for new members, October 23

Have you joined UMRA since November 1, 2017? Then you're invited to the Welcome New Members Reception in the Campus Club Lounge from 10 to 11:15 a.m. on Tuesday, October 23.

UMRA board and committee members will be on hand to meet and greet you. It's also a nice opportunity to get acquainted with other new members and find out about interest groups, activities, and campus discounts offered by UMRA. This reception will take place just before the monthly UMRA luncheon, so you can plan to attend both events with just one trip to campus.

RSVP to ander049@umn.edu if you plan to join us for the reception. We hope to see you there!

—John Anderson, chair, UMRA Membership Committee

September speaker Bill Doherty decries political tribalism

In a highly interactive session, Family Social Science Professor Bill Doherty and his audience shared their concerns about the intense polarization of American politics today.

The large gathering for UMRA's meeting in the Campus Club West Wing voiced many reasons for attending—*my family is so divided, my attitudes toward the other end of the political spectrum have become too severe*—and identified many culprits for the breakdown, including social media, self-segregation by political party, and loss of respect for science.

Doherty described Better Angels, a national nonprofit he helped found after the 2016 election. Its beginning came when two friends decided to convene a small number of “blues” and “reds” in southeastern Ohio for an experiment in defusing polarization. They asked Doherty, a family therapist with long experience assisting couples on the verge of divorce, to help them develop a model for helping political opposites understand each other and find common ground.

The experiment was so successful it quickly ballooned. A bus tour to 15 towns suggested that people everywhere were worried about polarization and eager to reduce it. Growing attention from national media fueled further interest. Today, Better Angels is operating citizen workshops in more than half the states of the U.S. and is beginning to pilot workshops for politicians.

Better Angels' goal is to depolarize America, not to make it purple. Doherty described techniques used in its workshops, which always involve equal numbers of red and blue participants, and listed some of the skills they promote: be curious; don't make assumptions; don't try to change the other's mind.

He concluded, “I have always wanted to be bilingual, and now I am; I speak red and blue. But the better angel in me is very worried about this nation.” He directed his audience to better-angels.org to become members (\$10 per year) and get involved in the movement.

—Chip Peterson, immediate past president



Peggy and Peter Rejto were among the UMRA members and guests who enjoyed the appetizer buffet served before the start of the September program in the Campus Club West Wing.

Food for thought

“The journey between what you once were and who you are now becoming is where the dance of life really takes place.”

—Barbara De Angelis

In Remembrance

We report the passing of UMRA members as we learn of these losses to our community. We extend our condolences to their families and friends.

Elwood Caldwell died May 22, 2018. Professor Caldwell was the first head of the University of Minnesota Department of Food Science and Nutrition and served in this role from 1972 until 1987. Prior to his University service, he worked for Quaker Oats, where Caldwell and his team developed the crunch in the cereal we know as Cap'n Crunch. A distinguished food scientist, he was internationally recognized for his expertise in food technology transfer and cooperation among scientists in academia, government, and food manufacturers. Elwood and his wife Florence, who served as the president of the University of Minnesota Women's Club (and passed away in 2015), were both long-time UMRA members.

Nomi Dworkin died August 21, 2018. Nomi was the widow of Martin Dworkin, retired faculty member from the University of Minnesota Medical School, Department of Microbiology (who passed away in 2014). Martin Dworkin was instrumental in developing UMRA's Journal of Opinions, Ideas and Essays. Both were long-time UMRA members.

—Kathleen O'Brien, Cares Committee

UMRA Cares supports members

For assistance and support in the event of the death or serious illness of an UMRA member or family member, please e-mail us at umracares@umn.edu or call 612-626-4403, and leave a message for UMRA Cares. Also, if you learn of someone who is facing a difficult life challenge, please contact the UMRA Cares Committee.

URVC leadership transition

After 20 years of dedicated and extensive involvement as University Retirees Volunteer Center (URVC) office manager and project director, Alan Kagan has stepped down from his leadership role to complete writing the book he has been working on for several years. The URVC Board of Directors is taking steps to ensure as smooth a leadership transition as possible.

Eric Hockert will coordinate the transition, ensuring effective communication among the volunteer office staff. Two new volunteer staff members will assume much of the work load. Marcia Radvin will identify suitable projects, communicate with project coordinators, and compile information about these projects, and Marva Sullivan will prepare

project announcements for distribution to the pool of potential volunteers. Sally Schakel, Joan Mitchell, Gwen Moxness, Jeanene Noll, Pat Tollefson, and a work-study student will continue their office and coordination tasks.

This transition period is unusually complicated because the URVC board and staff are in the midst of plans to launch a software management program. The software will give volunteers digital access to current information about projects together with the opportunity to sign up on line. The launch date will depend upon how soon the necessary information is entered and the system has been adequately tested.

—John Anderson, chair, URVC board



Longtime URVC leader Alan Kagan (pictured center) was honored with the first-ever Alan Kagan Award, presented by John Anderson during the annual volunteer appreciation event hosted at Eastcliff by Karen Kaler (pictured right) on September 26. "His work has made the U and the community a better place by making doing good for others a cultural norm," Anderson said.

1666 Coffman condominium for sale

322 Morris. 1,088 square feet, two bedroom, two bath, eastern view, living/dining room, kitchen, balcony, washer/dryer. \$199,500. For more information, contact Shawn Mackay at 651-584-8334 or shawnmackay@Edinarealty.com. Other units will be available in October.

1666 Coffman is a 55-plus community for people currently or formerly employed at the University who are actively working or actively retired.

To learn more, contact Eve Brown, chair, 1666 Coffman Promotions, at evebrown@comcast.net.

Two F&L Group meetings to focus on tax-efficient charitable giving

The October and November meetings of UMRA's Finance & Legal (F&L) Group will demonstrate how to make contributions to the U and other charitable institutions in tax-efficient ways, and what differences to expect under the new tax law. For the presentation on October 24 — **“How to get a better tax bang for your charitable buck”** — the focus will be on changes to the tax code that change the benefit of charitable giving; how to make gifts directly from an IRA; and on how to set up and use a donor-advised fund.

Topics to be covered on November 14 — **“The ever-evolving tax code, what to expect”** — include main changes in the new tax law and how they will impact you. Both sessions will be held from 2 to 3 p.m. at John A. Knutson & Co., PLLP (classroom location), 1781 Prior Avenue North in Falcon Heights, MN 55113. (Site contact: kelm@jakcpa.com or 651-379-5732)

You can also join both sessions via computer, tablet, or smartphone. For details, including how to participate remotely using GoToMeeting, please visit umra.umn.edu/news/2019charitable-giving. Questions? Contact Andy Whitman at awhitman@umn.edu or 612 747-6015.

November in the West Wing

UMRA's November 27 meeting will be the first of three “pilot program” luncheons for 2018–19, when we will extend an invitation to the speaker portion of our meeting to all members of the Campus Club. Our guest speaker, Kathryn Pearson, an associate professor of political science and frequent commentator in the media, will be offering her analysis of the midterm elections. The luncheon and program will be in the West Wing, with lunch starting at 12 noon. Be sure to save the date! The launch date will depend upon how soon the necessary information is entered and the system has been adequately tested.

—John Anderson, chair, URVC board

Book Club to discuss *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*

The UMRA Book Club will meet on Friday, October 19, at 2 p.m. at 1666 Coffman. Beth Bedell will lead the discussion of *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* by Margaret Craven. For more information, contact Pat Tollefson at p-toll@umn.edu.



UMRA's Social Activities Committee hosted a visit to the Arboretum in early September that included a narrated, one-hour tram tour followed by refreshments and socializing in the Oswald Visitor Center. Committee member Fred Bertschlinger, pictured standing at the end of the table, organized the event.

Book Notes: High praise for *A Gentleman in Moscow*

In 1922 Count Alexander Rostov is put under house arrest in the elegant Hotel Metropol in Moscow. He is to remain there for the rest of his life. His crime: being an aristocrat at the time of the Russian revolution.

Count Rostov's many friends on the Metropol staff enrich his dismal situation, and through his kind, respectful interactions with both staff and guests he forges bonds that will serve him well. He befriends a young girl who leads him on adventures throughout the secret back passages of the hotel. He enters into a love affair with a beautiful actress and develops friendships with a rooftop beekeeper, an orchestra conductor, and a Kremlin official. The count's job as a waiter enables him to spy on the Bolsheviks and provide information to an American journalist.

UMRA's book group members loved his “glass-half-full” attitude and gentlemanly treatment of all the persons with whom he interacted during his decades-long stay at the Metropol. There are snippets of historical facts about the years after the revolution and several infamous characters appear in the pages (Lenin, Trotsky, Khrushchev). However, this is not a history lesson. It's a book about the qualities of a gentleman who deals with dire circumstances and comes out on top.

—Stephanie Daily, Book Club member

UMRA University of Minnesota Retirees Association

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Thank you to the Bakken Center for Spirituality & Healing for helping to sponsor UMRA's October Newsletter.

THE BAKKEN CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY & HEALING HAS MANY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR UMRA MEMBERS

WELLBEING EXPERIENCE featuring Center Director Dr. Mary Jo Kreitzer, and local performer and author Dessa. Join us before the program begins for an indoor festival in Northrop featuring massage, therapy animals, nature-based therapies, aromatherapy, food trucks, and more.

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During the September tour of the Arboretum, Ginny Hanson beautifully captured these origami cranes taking flight, part of the monumental sculpture exhibition, "Origami in the Garden," on display until October 21.



Photo Club to meet October 9

Members of the Photo Club will share their favorite pictures of summer when they meet on October 9, 12:30–2:30 p.m., at the St. Anthony Library. Many members gather first at 11:30 a.m. for lunch at the nearby Great Dragon. Newcomers are welcome! Contact Sheri Goldsmith May at goldso09@gmail.com or go to umra.umn.edu/news/2018-09-photo-club-meeting to learn more.